



Directorate of
Intelligence

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Afghanistan Situation Report

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14 February 1984

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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OPERATION CONTINUES NEAR KABUL

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A Soviet-Afghan multibattalion operation northwest of Kabul has resulted in heavy Soviet casualties and a flight of the populace from the Shomali area. [REDACTED]

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Soviet and Afghan military initiatives met stiff resistance throughout Afghanistan in January, although military operations improved control in the southeast. [REDACTED]

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This document is prepared weekly by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues raised in the publication should be directed to [REDACTED]

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OPERATION CONTINUES NEAR KABUL

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A Soviet-Afghan multibattalion sweep operation near Kabul was continuing as of 7 February.

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The objective is to clear areas adjacent to the Kabul-to-Charikar road, and resistance has continued to be heavy.

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saw two truckloads of Soviet corpses being unloaded at the Soviet hospital in Kabul on 5 February. US Embassy reports indicate that the number of Soviet dead in the operation may reach 100.

Comment:

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In addition to the heavy casualties among the Soviets, the fighting apparently has resulted in depopulation of the area, at least temporarily. Istalef, located midway between Kabul and Charikar, has become a ghost town, according to Embassy sources, with most of the populace having fled to the capital. Civilian casualties appear to be lighter than those that resulted from a similar operation in the area in November 1983.

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SOVIET EQUIPMENT REPAIR PROBLEMS

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Inadequate maintenance has been a continuing source of frustration for the Soviet and Afghan military, and the situation is unlikely to improve in the near term. The harsh climate and terrain of Afghanistan contribute to many of the difficulties, particularly in high-technology aircraft. The Soviets have not established large maintenance facilities in the country and

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continue to rely on bases in the USSR for overhauls and major repairs of equipment. [REDACTED]

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IN BRIEF

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-- [REDACTED] Afghan resistance leaders were "very disappointed" over the lack of interest shown in Afghanistan at the meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization in Casablanca. [REDACTED]

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-- The Afghan regime plans to stage an "Islamic Meeting" in Kabul 14-16 March, according to US Embassy reports. The conference is an apparent attempt to gain a measure of international recognition for the regime. [REDACTED]

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PERSPECTIVE**AFGHANISTAN IN JANUARY**

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Soviet and Afghan military initiatives met stiff resistance throughout Afghanistan in January, although military operations brought improved control in the southeast.

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Soviet Views, Plans

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Soviet and Afghan regime advantages in firepower were being eroded by improvements in insurgent capabilities,

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there were 150,000 insurgents and infiltration from Pakistan and Iran is increasing their ranks by 30,000 to 40,000 each year. The Afghan Army, meanwhile, is plagued by desertions, and the Afghan party remains badly divided.

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no end to the fighting was in sight, that Soviet troop morale was poor and getting worse, and that 10,000 to 12,000 Soviet soldiers had been killed in Afghanistan--about double our estimate.

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Kabul Area

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Lack of snow in the area has permitted insurgents in the region to remain highly active this winter, but the good weather has also permitted heavy bombings by Afghan and Soviet aircraft. In early January, insurgents were active in attacking convoys and regime garrisons throughout the Shomali area northwest of Kabul and at the mouth of the Lowgar Valley south of the capital, according to US Embassy sources. Soviet and Afghan sweeps and heavy aerial bombardment were met with stiff resistance. Civilian casualties, according to the sources, have been high, while Soviet casualties were reportedly significant and insurgent casualties fairly light. In the northern Shomali, fighting continued throughout January, according to US Embassy sources. Although the Soviets have controlled the flow of traffic through the Salang Pass, insurgents from the Panjsher have been able to hijack trucks at will.

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The heavy reprisals against civilians in areas of strong insurgent activity were particularly notable in January, especially in the Shomali region and Ghazni. Such reprisals could result in depopulation of strategic areas and a consequent reduction of support for the resistance. To date, however, similar reprisals--in the Shomali, the Lowgar Valley, Ghazni, Qandahar, and Herat--have only temporarily diminished the level of insurgent activity.

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Other Areas

The resistance remained strong in southern and western Afghanistan throughout January. According to US Embassy sources, Soviet armor and troops have concentrated near Qandahar airport, but Soviet action has been limited primarily to artillery and aerial bombardment of the city's outskirts and surrounding villages. At the end of the month, insurgents continued to control all of Qandahar City except for a small area of regime buildings in the center. Some regime outposts around the city were destroyed after firing on the insurgents, though others reportedly maintained cordial relations with the guerrillas. Insurgent attacks on convoys from Herat and Kabul continue to be common. [REDACTED]

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Outlook

We believe Soviet efforts in the coming weeks will continue to be directed primarily at limiting and deterring an upsurge in guerrilla activity this spring. Soviet and regime forces will probably continue to concentrate on the southeastern provinces to stem insurgent infiltration, and further cross-border incidents may occur. Pressure will also continue in northwestern Kabul Province to maintain security around the capital and to protect convoy movements. The activities of the Panjsher insurgents will remain under close scrutiny for the same reasons. Finally, the deterioration of security in Herat and Qandahar may prompt a series of large-scale operations in those areas. The insurgents, however, are likely to remain resilient and may well manage a large increase in their activity this spring.

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